Microsoft AZ-400 Exam: Study Guide, Skills, and Preparation Tips

DevOps has become an important part of modern software development because organizations need reliable ways to build, test, secure, and deliver applications. The **Microsoft AZ-400 Exam** focuses on the practical skills required to design and implement Microsoft DevOps solutions across Azure DevOps and GitHub.

Candidates preparing for the exam can review the Microsoft AZ-400 exam preparation resource alongside official learning materials, hands-on practice, and a structured study plan. Microsoft currently organizes the exam around processes and communications, source control, build and release pipelines, security and compliance, and instrumentation.

What Is the Microsoft AZ-400 Exam?

The AZ-400 exam is titled Designing and Implementing Microsoft DevOps Solutions. It is associated with the Microsoft Certified: DevOps Engineer Expert certification and evaluates a candidate's ability to implement DevOps practices across development and operations environments.

The role involves collaboration between developers, infrastructure administrators, security professionals, Azure administrators, and site reliability engineers. Therefore, preparation should cover more than individual Azure services. Candidates should understand how development workflows, automation, security, testing, deployment, and monitoring work together.

Microsoft states that the current English-language exam was updated on July 27, 2026. The latest skills outline should therefore be used when creating a study plan.

AZ-400 Exam Skills to Focus On

Understanding the exam objectives is one of the most effective ways to organize preparation. The current skill distribution includes five major areas.

Processes and Communications

This area covers approximately 10–15% of the exam. Topics include work-flow management, feedback cycles, collaboration, documentation, metrics, queries, and integrations.

Candidates should become familiar with tools such as Azure Boards, GitHub Projects, repositories, wikis, webhooks, and collaboration integrations. Understanding concepts such as lead time, cycle time, and time to recovery can also help when reviewing DevOps metrics.

Source Control Strategy

Source control represents another 10–15% of the exam. Git is particularly important because modern DevOps workflows rely heavily on version control and collaborative development.

Study areas should include branching strategies, pull requests, branch policies, branch protection, versioning, and testing strategies. It is useful to understand when different approaches, such as feature branches, release branches, and trunk-based development, are appropriate.

Build and Release Pipelines

Build and release pipelines carry the largest weighting, at approximately 50–55%. Consequently, this should receive significant attention during AZ-400 exam preparation.

Focus on Azure Pipelines, GitHub Actions, YAML, pipeline triggers, agents or runners, multi-stage pipelines, parallel execution, deployment automation, testing, and release strategies.

Hands-on practice is especially valuable here. Rather than simply memorizing terminology, candidates should understand how a pipeline moves code from source control through validation and testing toward deployment.

Security, Compliance, and Monitoring

Security and Compliance

Security and compliance represent approximately 10–15% of the current exam. Preparation should include secure development practices, security scanning, governance, secrets management, and methods for validating code and pipeline environments.

The objective is not simply to recognize security terminology. Candidates should understand how security can be incorporated into development and delivery processes so that problems can be identified before applications reach production.

Instrumentation Strategy

Instrumentation accounts for approximately 5–10% of the exam. This section focuses on monitoring DevOps environments and using collected information to understand application and operational performance.

Review monitoring concepts, telemetry, metrics, feedback, and analysis. Understanding how monitoring information can support troubleshooting and continuous improvement is particularly relevant to DevOps work.

How to Prepare for the AZ-400 Exam

A structured approach can make preparation more manageable. Start by reviewing the current Microsoft skills outline and divide your study schedule according to the exam

weightings. Because build and release pipelines represent the largest domain, allocate substantial practice time to CI/CD, Azure Pipelines, GitHub Actions, YAML, testing, and deployment.

Next, combine theory with hands-on work. Microsoft provides learning paths covering enterprise DevOps, CI with Azure Pipelines and GitHub Actions, release strategies, secure continuous deployment, and infrastructure as code.

Practice Git workflows regularly and create sample pipelines where possible. Experimenting with branches, pull requests, automated tests, pipeline triggers, deployment stages, and monitoring can help connect individual concepts into a complete DevOps workflow.

Are Practice Questions Useful for AZ-400?

Practice questions can help candidates identify knowledge gaps and become familiar with the types of concepts they need to review. However, practice should complement learning rather than replace it.

After completing a practice session, review every incorrect answer and identify the underlying topic. If a question exposes a weakness in YAML pipelines, source control, security, or monitoring, return to that subject and reinforce the concept through documentation and practical exercises.

Microsoft also provides a free practice assessment as part of its exam preparation resources.

Final Preparation Strategy

A strong AZ-400 preparation plan combines official documentation, structured learning, hands-on Azure DevOps and GitHub experience, and practice assessments. Avoid relying solely on memorization because DevOps scenarios often require candidates to understand how multiple tools and processes work together.

Before scheduling the exam, review the latest objectives and confirm that your preparation reflects the current skills measured. The current Microsoft exam page lists a passing score of 700.

For additional study support, candidates can also review Microsoft AZ-400 exam preparation materials and use them as part of a broader preparation strategy. With consistent study, practical exercises, and careful review of the current objectives, candidates can approach the Microsoft AZ-400 exam with a stronger understanding of the DevOps skills it evaluates.